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| **Date:** | 2 April 2012 |
| **Subject:** | Regional students benefit from NBN rollout |

Online delivery of diploma courses to students via the National Broadband Network (NBN) is expanding learning opportunities in regional and remote Australia.

The *Training through NBN: Australia – The World!* project is supporting student learning by enhancing interaction with teachers and providing greater access to expertise, unimpaired by the geographical location of students.

Conducted by TAFE Illawarra in New South Wales, this project is demonstrating the capacity of the NBN to deliver the Diploma of Children’s Services through video streaming and tele-presence solutions to remote learners.

“This is a person-centred profession which requires highly competent communication skills,” says project manager Jennifer Hopkins, of TAFE Illawarra.

“Through this project, our learners will have the opportunity to practice these skills throughout their course, allowing them to develop their skills in early childhood practice much faster and with greater competence.”

To date, the online delivery of the course has been limited to chat sessions, with oral and video communication not used due to lack of broadband connectivity and slow uploads and downloads.

“The NBN will allow us to use Adobe connect and SkypeTM to facilitate a higher level of communication,” says Hopkins.

“Students will be confident that their learning can be facilitated through the NBN network without the frustrations of slow speed, dropping out and poor quality.”

The project has been made possible through funding from the National VET E-learning Strategy, whose NBN E-learning Programs provide opportunitiesto create innovative approaches to demonstrate the power of broadband to enhance outcomes for learners, and promote growth in broadband-based training as the NBN rollout proceeds.

The National VET E-learning Strategy is the responsibility of the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG), a key policy advisory group on national directions and priorities for information and communication technologies in the VET sector.

“By sponsoring e-learning programs at NBN sites, we are expanding participation and access for learners, stimulating innovative approaches to training and employment, and improving the skill levels of the Australian workforce,” says FLAG Chair Raymond Garrand, Chief Executive of the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

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**Core statements for editorial use**

* The National VET E-learning Strategy 2012-2015 (‘the Strategy’) is aimed at strengthening the Australian training sector’s use of new learning technologies, stimulating innovative approaches to increasing participation in training and employment, and improving the skill levels of the Australian workforce
* Investment in the Strategy will stimulate innovative approaches to increasing participation in training and improve the skill levels of the Australian workforce
* To enable the three-year program of action, government funding has been approved to:
* capitalise on the rollout of the National Broadband Network by demonstrating the benefits of the national investment in broadband
* support large-scale workforce development in industry through partnerships and comprehensive e-learning advice
* expand participation and access for individuals through e-learning programs delivering foundation skills and e-literacy
* The Strategy is managed by the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG), a key policy advisory group on national directions and priorities for information and communication technologies in the VET sector
* The chair of FLAG is Mr Raymond Garrand, Chief Executive of the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

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| **Specific enquiries:** | Ms Lye Goh  Business Manager, NBN E-learning Projects (ACT, NSW, NT & Qld)  Tel: (02) 9244 5404 Mobile: 0404 054 494  Email: [lye.goh@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:lye.goh@det.nsw.edu.au) |
| **General enquiries:** | For general enquiries about the National VET E-learning Strategy, please contact:  Secretariat of the Flexible Learning Advisory Group  Telephone: 03 9954 2700  Email: [flag\_enquiries@natese.gov.au](mailto:flag_enquiries@natese.gov.au) Website: [flexiblelearning.net.au](http://flexiblelearning.net.au) |